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JANUARY 5TH, 1869.

DR. CHARNOCK, VICE-PRESIDENT, IN THE CHAIR.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The following new members were elected :—

Fellow—Tom Craston, jun., Esq., 2, Romsey Road, Stockwell Park, S.

Local Secretary—Charles Gilman, Esq., for Jamaica.

The following presents were announced :—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

From the SOCIETY.—Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, North China Branch, No. iii.

From the EDITOR.—The Medical Press and Circular.

From Dr. CARTER BLAKE—The Travels of Pedro de Cieza de Leon.
By C. R. Markham.

From E. W. BRABROOK, Esq.—Antiquity of Man : Sir C. Denison.

FOR THE MUSEUM.

From CHARLES GILMAN, Esq., Loc. Sec. A.S.L.—Two Bows and Five Arrows of Rama Indians from Nicaragua.

From Captain BURTON.—Human Remains of Tupy Indians from a Brazilian Kjökkenmödding.

Dr. CARTER BLAKE read the following description of a skull, which was placed on the table, received from the Chincha Islands :—

On a Skull from the Chincha Islands. By C. CARTER BLAKE, Doct. Sci., F.G.S., Hon. F.A.S.L., Lecturer Comp. Anat. and Zool. Westminster Hospital.

The skull exhibited by the Rev. J. G. Wood, Loc. Sec. A.S.L., is derived from the Guano Deposit, Chincha Islands. To avoid all logomachy, I may premise that in no sense can it be termed a Chincha skull in the sense in which the word has been commonly used.* The word, in the signification applied to it by Cieza de Leon, has been applied to the inhabitants of the Great Valley of Chincha. The present skull has been derived from the islands bearing a similar name. It remains to be seen whether it belongs to the Qquichua or Chincha type of skull, if as I have suggested in my paper on the "Cranial Characters of Peruvian Races," that the inspection of a very large series of ascertained skulls will alone enable us to decide whether there is really any distinction between the Chincha and Qquichua types of cranium.

Cieza de Leon (p. 260) says that the first inhabitants of the Chincha Valley were of small stature, and that the Chinchas drove them before them and finally exterminated them. The theory might be propounded that the inhabitants of the Chincha Islands were the descendants of this early race. The small cranium of the present specimen might lead one to infer that some of these smaller races were driven towards the Chincha Islands ; but I guard myself against advancing such a theory.

The present skull is markedly brachycephalic, and affords marks of sinistral occipitolateral comprimation. The foramen magnum has its

* *Miki in Trans. Ethn. Soc. Lond.*, new series, ii, 222, 225, q. cf. *passim*. *Travels of Cieza de Leon*, by Markham, 228, 260.

longitudinal median axis towards the dextral side. The mastoids are large. There are neither paroccipitals nor pneumatic processes. The basisphenoids and basioccipitals are unusually broad. The glenoid cavities are deep and laterally extended; a condition which is concomitant, or perhaps subserves relationship with the hard diet of the maize-eating aborigine. The teeth are large and worn. The individual was probably of between twenty-five and thirty years of age, as shown by the condition of the unworn crown of *m* 3. The lateral view of the skull shows that the line of greatest height (to a spot about half the total length of the sagittal suture) is longer than Frère's line to the confluence of the coronal and sagittal sutures. All the sutures are open, especially those near the lateral fontanelles, a character which has reference to the occipital compression which the skull has undergone. The alisphenoids and parietals join on both sides. The sutures are not remarkably complex, and there are no Wormian bones. The superciliary ridges are not excessive, and the suborbital foramina are small. Slight maxillary prognathism exists.

In the general characters it rather agrees with the skulls labelled as Quichua, and derived from Pachacamac, in our public collection than with the known Chinchu skulls (as, *e.g.*, Coll. Surgeons, No. 5424, British Museum, *y*). I should not infer from this specimen that it belonged to any other race than that of the brachycephalic inhabitants of the Western Peruvian Valleys, which again reappears on the eastern side of the Andes, amongst the Aucas, and other south-eastern tribes. The Auka skull in the Society's collection may be profitably compared with the present specimen.

TABLE OF MEASUREMENTS.

Greatest length	165 millimètres.	Cephalic index	...	83.6
„ breadth	138 „	Facial angle	...	75°

The Rev. DUNBAR HEATH said he would take that opportunity to deliver himself of a heresy on the subject of skulls which he had not hitherto had the face to proclaim at any of their meetings. The skull on the table was no doubt a very small one; he would not dispute its form as a round skull. But what he wanted to know was, whether they learned anything by those facts—in short, was there anything in craniology or was there not? He admitted the facts, but he could not admit that from one skull the relationship of the race could be distinguished. There was no doubt consanguinity in races; but when attempting to distinguish the characters of savage races by the forms of their skulls, there should be hundreds of skulls produced to determine by a great mass of evidence that there was a general character in all. He wanted to know how many of the skulls had been measured, and what generic differences really existed between the skulls of different races sufficient to distinguish them. Unless these points were satisfactorily determined, he could not admit himself to be a craniologist.

Mr. MACKENZIE, while admitting that there were great differences in the size and form of skulls, did not consider these differences to indicate correctly either the size or the quality of the brain. With

regard to the skull on the table, he wanted to know where it came from, as the Chincha Islands was somewhat vague.

Dr. CARTER BLAKE, in replying to the remarks of Mr. Heath, said that in the collections in New York, Paris, and London there were about 3,000 Peruvian skulls, amongst whom there were marked and well ascertained distinctions. He had examined many Chincha skulls; he had made his deductions from them, and he saw no reason now to disturb those deductions. He felt certain that the skull on the table was not a Chincha skull, and that they, that race, were of eastern origin. The Chincha skulls, however, in our collections had some peculiar characters which the one now exhibited did not present. It was not a Chincha skull, although it had come from the very small Archipelago termed the Chincha Islands. With regard to Mr. Heath's remarks on the general value of craniology, Dr. Blake observed that in that part of South America, from the Equator to Valparaiso, there was a certain series of tribes with a certain fixed character of skull—the brachycephalic—and each of those different races, amounting to about twenty-three, presented distinct craniological characters, so that they could be distinguished one from the other. In point of fact, we know more about those races than of the races in any country in Europe, because in the collections of skulls it was known more clearly where they were derived from. He thought the induction quite enough to found a satisfactory theory.

The Rev. DUNBAR HEATH observed that what Dr. Blake had said was to him incredible. The large number of skulls he had examined must have been those of individuals of different ages, and it was known that each year of life altered the form of the skull. To believe that twenty-three distinct but cognate races could be distinguished by the characters of the skulls of individuals of all ages, possessing all kinds of habits, and who must have been also more or less connected, would require stronger evidence than he conceived it possible to obtain.

Dr. DONOVAN: As Dr. Blake has commented on certain physical characteristics of the skull brought forward, he, Dr. Donovan, begged to ask if Dr. Blake drew any inferences concerning the mental qualities of individuals—whether nationally or personally considered—from the size and form of their skulls; and if so, to what extent such indications might be trusted. Unless skulls afforded some such information they could have no ethnological value whatever.

Dr. CARTER BLAKE said the only fact he should like to infer from the shape of the skull on the table, so far as mental peculiarities could be defined from it, was that it was a skull which had been much altered in youth by deformation. Through all Northern Peru, without exception, there was not a single case of an Indian whose skull had not been depressed or compressed in youth. That compression, perhaps, produced an alteration in the size of the brain, although an opposite opinion was expressed by Professor Owen. The brain in the skull under examination had been excessively small, therefore, to a certain extent, it might be inferred to indicate small mental power. Dr. Blake added, in reply to a question from Mr. Macgrigor Allan,

that the skull had been artificially compressed on the left side. He had no doubt that when Mr. Heath studied the voluminous literature relating to Peruvian skulls, he would change his opinion ; as it was, the *argumentum ad ignorantiam* was scarcely admissible.

The Rev. J. G. Wood then gave an account of the chief poisons used by savages, commencing with those employed by the Bosjesmans of South Africa. He pointed out, in the first instance, the distinction between them and the bushmen of Australia, with whom they were sometimes confounded. To illustrate his description, specimens of the poisons and a large display of weapons used by savage tribes were exhibited, all of the arrows being poisoned and requiring great care in handling. The first class of poisons described were those made from animal substances. One of those poisons used by the Bosjesmans was formed from the poison-secreting glands of certain serpents, especially of the puff adder, mixed with the inspissated juice of an euphorbia. That poison, however, could not be exhibited in perfection, as the comparatively cold climate of England rendered brittle a composition which required heat to retain it in its proper condition ; in consequence of this brittleness nearly all the arrows had lost some of the poison. In applying the poison to arrows a barb made of a triangular slip of quill was generally used, which was separate from the arrow itself, but was inserted into the poison while still soft. When an arrow so constructed entered the flesh the barb became detached and remained in the wound, retaining a sufficient quantity of the poison to produce death. Another kind of animal poison used by the Bosjesman was that of the larva of an insect called kaa, or n'gwa, sounded with a peculiar click with the tongue. It was the grub of a beetle that feeds on a peculiar tree in South Africa ; the grub, on falling to the ground, formed a cocoon with the earth on which it fell. The Bosjesmans took the grub, broke it asunder, and with each half spotted the juices on the points of their arrows. The effect of that poison was to madden the wounded animals, and to kill by inducing furious mania. The points of the poisoned arrows were separate from the shafts and were kept inverted in the hollow head of the shaft, which served as a case until they were required for use. One of the arrows poisoned with the n'gwa grub was exhibited. Mr. Wood exhibited specimens of the grub itself, and the earthen cocoons, which were presented to him by Mr. T. Baines. He then proceeded to describe several vegetable poisons used by the natives of Guiana, respecting which he had gained much information from the late Mr. Waterton, who had given him a complete set of the weapons which were exhibited to the meeting. The Macoushi Indians made a very strong poison, the manufacture of which was kept so great a secret that the person who made it entered covertly into the woods with a basket for collecting the materials, and built a hut wherein to concoct the poison unseen, and after it was made the hut was burned down for the better preservation of secrecy. Among the materials said to be used in the composition were certain ants, and the fangs of venomous snakes, but Mr. Wood believed that they had no practical effect in the poison, and that in all probability they were merely collected for the sake of deception. The poison was used in